



Funding Opportunity Announcement
No. MEDRC-21-001
2021 Humanitarian Desalination Challenge
Pathway Research Grants

تحدي
عمان لتطوير أنظمة
التحلية الفردية لحالات
الكوارث الإنسانية



OMAN
HUMANITARIAN
DESALINATION
CHALLENGE

Application Checklist

The following table contains a summary of the information that you are required to submit with your application.

Applications will be accepted monthly in 2021, due at the end of each month. A total of three grants for up to 150,000 USD\$ each will be made in 2021. Applications will be accepted until the 2021 research funds have been fully committed (See Sec. D.2.).

	What to submit	Required content	Form or format
	Title page	See Sec. D.1.2.1	
	Table of contents	See Sec. D.1.2.2	
	Technical proposal:	See Sec. D.1.2.3	
	Executive summary		
	Background		
	Technical approach/Project Activities		
	Research work plan and schedule		
	Environmental impacts		
	Evaluation criteria	See Sec. E.1	
	Project Budget:	See Sec D.1.2.4	Page 11
	Funding plan & letters of commitment		
	Budget proposal		
	Budget narrative		
	Personnel Qualifications	See Sec. D.1.2.5	
	Required Permits and Approvals	See Sec. D.1.2.6	
	Letters of support	See Sec. D.1.2.7	

Acronyms

FOA	Funding Opportunity Announcement
GST	Gulf Standard Time
MEDRC	Middle East Desalination Research Center
PAC	Project Advisory Committee
PI	Principal Investigator
QA/QC	Quality Assurance and Quality Control
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USD\$	United States Dollar

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Section A. Funding Opportunity Description

A.1. Program Information

The Middle East North Africa region is acknowledged as the most water stressed region in the world. The traditional dependence on conservation, storage, and conveyance of surface water and groundwater no longer meets the needs of the populations. Purification of nonconventional groundwater and surface water sources, contaminated by dissolved materials, has become an important part of regional water supply portfolios to reduce pressure on existing water resources.

Fortunately, significant research advancements continue to lower the cost, energy use, and environmental impacts from large-scale desalination technologies. The same scientific advancements have not been extended to small-scale, inexpensive, autonomous, single-user or small group desalination devices.

We asked ourselves: What might be possible when an individual or small group can inexpensively purify saline contaminated water sources, independently of current large-scale desalination factories?

To answer that question, the Middle East Desalination Research Center (MEDRC) in Muscat, Oman, and its partners, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Oman's Ministry of Higher Education, Research & Innovation (MoHERI) have announced the Oman Humanitarian Desalination Challenge (OHDC).

The desalination challenge is led by MEDRC Water Research and consists of two parts (this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) addresses the second part):

- (1) **OHDC Prize Competition** - 700,000 USD\$. Further information about the **Prize Competition** can be found at <http://desalinationchallenge.com/>. The 2020 competition has been extended into 2021 due to COVID 19 and the problems associated with a worldwide pandemic. If there is no winner from the 2020 competition, registration will be reopened for the **Prize** competition in late 2021.
- (2) **OHDC Pathway Research Grants** – Grants of up to 150,000 USD\$ will be awarded for an innovative family-sized desalination device as a precursor technology that might win the Oman Humanitarian Desalination Challenge Prize Competition. This Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) provides information for researchers to compete for 2021 grant funding.

The **OHDC Pathway Research Grants**, sponsored by USAID, will advertise monthly FOAs in 2021 until the all the research funds have been committed.

A.2. Funding Opportunity Announcement Objectives

The FOA's objective is to invite private industry, universities, water utilities, governments, non-profits, individuals, and other research sponsors to submit proposals to cost share research projects for the **OHDC Pathway Research Grants**.

The technical objectives of the FOA are:

- Delivering an innovative family-sized, 120 liters of water per day, brackish desalination device as a precursor or earlier generation to a hand-held device that might then win the **OHDC Prize Competition** by meeting the selection criteria.
- Supporting a high degree of technical risk and uncertainty, not a simple downscaling of existing desalination processes.
- Achieving significant, not incremental, improvements in family-sized desalination technologies versus existing alternatives in order to reduce pressure on existing water resources.

Section B. Award Information

B.1. Total Program Funding

A total of three **OHDC Pathway Research Grants** for up to 150,000 USD\$ each will be made in 2021.

The FOA will announced monthly, and applications will be accepted at the end of each month until 2021 research funds are fully committed.

B.2. Grant Involvement

Awards made under this FOA will be made through a grant. The recipient should expect MEDRC to have involvement in the project. Involvement by MEDRC may include:

- Coordination of contributions made by team members from the different partners.
- Evaluation of successes as each task is undertaken.
- Suggested changes to tasks to accomplish project goals.
- Review, input, and comment at key interim stages during the project including the draft and final research outcomes and the final project report.

Section C. Eligibility Information

C.1. Eligible Applicants

Any responsible research sponsor is eligible to receive an award under this FOA, including:

- Individuals.
- Institutions of higher education.
- Commercial or industrial organizations.
- Private entities.
- Governmental entities.
- Non-profit organizations.

Those not eligible:

- Since this activity is funded by USAID, proposals are required to be eligible for USAID assistance. In some cases, applicable law or regulation, including regulations of the U.S. Office of Foreign Assets Control, prohibit USAID assistance to or in a particular country, or to a particular person or entity, including as co-sponsor.

Applicants are encouraged to leverage the experience of international partners with considerable expertise in desalination.

C.2. Cost Sharing Requirements

Applicants must be capable of cost sharing 50 percent or more of the total research study costs.

Cost sharing may be made through in-kind (See Section C.2.1. below) contributions, donations, or cash contributions. Cost share funding from sources outside the applicant's organization (e.g., loans or other grants) should be secured and available to the applicant prior to award. Please see *Section D. Funding Plan and Letters of Commitment* for more information regarding the documentation required to verify commitments to meet cost sharing requirements.

C.2.1. In-Kind Contributions and Donations

In-kind contributions and donations constitute the value of noncash contributions by entities that benefit a MEDRC assisted project. These contributions may be in the form of labor, reduced overhead, equipment, supplies, other expendable property, as well as the value of goods and services directly benefiting and specifically identifiable to the proposed project. The cost or value of in-kind contributions and donations that have been or will be relied on to satisfy a cost sharing or matching requirement for another grant may not be used to satisfy the cost-share requirement for an award under this FOA.

C.3. Length of Projects

In general, the research portion of the project is expected to take 12 months once the award is made. The proposed research projects should be completed within **16 months** of award including the required final technical report reviewed by the PAC, comments addressed, and the report suitable for publication (see *Section F.1. Reporting Requirements*).

Applications for projects requiring more time will be considered for funding only under limited circumstances.

Section D. Application and Submission Information

This document contains all the necessary information required in order to successfully submit an application. Applicants should review it carefully before applying.

D.1. Content and Form of Application Submission

All applications must conform to the requirements set forth below. Please carefully evaluate the program objectives in Section A. Funding Opportunity Description. However, the value to this program of any other tasks proposed must be substantiated in your proposal.

D.1.1. Application Format and Length

The technical proposal and evaluation criteria section (defined below) of application package shall be limited to a maximum of **20** (twenty) consecutively numbered pages. If this section of the application exceeds **20** pages, only the first **20** pages will be evaluated. Other required application content will not count towards the page limitation. The font shall be at least 12 points in size and easily readable. Page size shall be either US Letter or A4, including charts, maps, and drawings. Margins should be standard margins. Oversized pages will not be accepted.

Applications will be prescreened for compliance to the page number limitations.

D.1.2. Application Content

The application must include the following elements to be considered complete:

- Title page
- Table of contents
- Technical proposal and evaluation criteria (limited to 20 pages)
 - Executive summary
 - Background/introduction
 - Technical approach and project activities
 - Research work plan and schedule
 - Quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC)
 - Facilities and equipment information
 - Environmental impacts
 - Evaluation criteria
- Project budget
 - Funding plan
 - Letters of commitment
 - Budget proposal
 - Budget narrative

- Personnel qualifications
- Required permits or approvals
- Letters of support
- Summary Slide - see Section D.1.2.8. for additional information.

D.1.2.1. Title Page

Provide a brief, informative, and descriptive title for the proposed work that indicates the nature of the project. Include the name and address of the applicant, and the name and address, e-mail address, and telephone of the Principal Investigator.

D.1.2.2. Table of Contents

List all major sections of the proposal in the Table of Contents.

D.1.2.3. Technical Proposal and Evaluation Criteria

The technical proposal should present information in a manner which allows it to “stand alone” without the need to reference other documents. It should describe the capability of your organization to participate in this program and should demonstrate a thorough understanding of the technology of the work topic proposed for study. The technical proposal should be organized and written so that it can be easily read and meaningfully evaluated by MEDRC personnel and selected external evaluators from a variety of different functional and technical disciplines.

The technical proposal and evaluation criteria (**20** pages maximum) include:

- (1) Executive summary
- (2) Background/introduction
- (3) Technical approach and project activities
- (4) Research work plan and schedule
- (5) QA/QC program
- (6) Facilities and equipment information
- (7) Environmental impacts
- (8) Evaluation criteria

Executive Summary

The executive summary should include:

- The date, applicant name, institution/organization name, city, and country
- A one paragraph project summary that specifies the work proposed, including how funds will be used to accomplish specific project activities and briefly identifies how the proposed project contributes to accomplishing the objectives of this FOA
- The length of time and estimated completion date for the proposed project

Background/Introduction

Describe the current status of the technology supporting the specific research work proposed. Address the following issues:

- What is the problem to be solved? Please summarize the objective identified in Section A. Funding Opportunity Description that you are addressing or a justification for addressing other problems in this section.
- What is the proposed solution?
- Provide background and cite relevant literature and past experience.
- Provide a comprehensive background on the problem based on experience and what is reported in literature. If appropriate, identify specific water problem(s) and location.
- What technical risks are associated with the proposed investigation? Have you or anyone else conducted similar projects? If so, how successful have these projects been?
- What would success look like? If the project proved successful, what would be the result at the end of the investigation, and what would be the potential for follow-on funding for further work? What does the commercialization path look like?

Technical Approach and Project Activities

This section should describe the technical approach and proposed research activities to be conducted under the project and include sufficient detail to permit a comprehensive evaluation of the proposal. The applicant's understanding will be established not only by the proposed approach, but also by anticipating and/or identifying the various problems and assessment of the severity of each problem.

Describe in detail the activities to be conducted, including the development of the technical report. For each activity, describe what studies and tests you plan to conduct, what kind of apparatus you will need, what data you plan to collect, and what you will do with the data. Describe the kind of staff, the number of staff hours, and the schedule for completing each activity.

Research Work Plan and Schedule

Provide a research work plan based on the technical approach and project activities. The research work plan should include a schedule showing individual tasks with significant milestones identified for the work to be accomplished. The work plan should also identify work-hour requirements for each task or phase, including time for the preparation, submission, and approval of required data and reports. Clearly and concisely convey this schedule using a table, Gantt chart, project network diagram, or any other visual format. Include time for review and finalization of the technical report. The Final Report Template is at www.medrc.org/research/foa.

The information will be used to help evaluate your understanding of the work requirement.

Clearly identify the proposed organization to manage the work, its relationship to the applicant's overall corporate structure, and the function and responsibilities of any subcontractors. Include a description of the work anticipated to be performed under any subcontract.

Quality Assurance and Quality Control Program

Identify the proposed procedures for QA/QC protocols to be used throughout the project including statistical data analysis, peer review, instrument calibration, etc. If a QA/QC program already exists in your institution, provide a summary of the program and provide additional information as needed to address the use of the program for your proposed project.

Facilities and Equipment Information

Describe the facilities where the work will be performed. List the equipment that is available for use on this agreement and which will be required for carrying out the proposed work. List and justify any special equipment that is required and indicate the extent to which the work cannot be accomplished without it. Information on alternative sources considered for the equipment should also be included.

Environmental Impacts

Describe any potential environmental benefits or adverse impacts of the proposed work and plans for disposal of wastes if any result from the project. If any permits and licenses are required for this project, describe how they will be obtained.

Evaluation Criteria

(See Section E.1. Technical Proposal: Evaluation Criteria for additional details, including a detailed description of each criterion and subcriterion and points associated with each.)

The evaluation criteria portion of your application should thoroughly address each criterion and subcriterion in the order presented to assist in the complete and accurate evaluation of your proposal.

D.1.2.4. Project Budget

The project budget includes:

- (1) Funding plan and letters of commitment
- (2) Budget proposal
- (3) Budget narrative

Funding Plan and Letters of Commitment

Describe how the non-MEDRC share of project costs will be obtained. MEDRC will use this information in making a determination of financial capability.

Project funding provided by a source other than the applicant shall be supported with letters of commitment from these additional sources. Letters of commitment shall identify the following elements:

- The amount of funding commitment
- The date the funds will be available to the applicant
- Any time constraints on the availability of funds
- Any other contingencies associated with the funding commitment

Commitment letters from third-party funding sources should be submitted with your project

application. If commitment letters are not available at the time of the application submission, please provide a timeline for submission of all commitment letters. Cost share funding from sources outside the applicant's organization, should be secured and available to the applicant prior to award.

MEDRC will not make funds available for an award under this FOA until the recipient has secured the cost-share. MEDRC will execute a grant agreement once cost-share funding has been secured or MEDRC determines that there is sufficient evidence and likelihood that cost share funds will be available to the applicant subsequent to executing the agreement.

Please identify the sources of the cost share contribution for the project, including:

- Any overhead reductions to the cost-share requirement.
- Any third-party in-kind costs or donations
- Any monetary contributions by the applicant to the cost-share requirement and source funds (e.g., reserve account, tax revenue, and/or assessments).
- Any funding requested or received from other entities.
- Any pending funding requests that have not yet been approved and explain how the project will be affected if such funding is denied.
- Any funding requested or received from other partners.

Budget Proposal

The budget proposal should include detailed information on the categories listed below and must clearly identify ***all*** project costs, including those that will be contributed as cost share and those that will be covered using the funding requested from MEDRC. Unit costs must be provided for all budget items, including the cost of work to be provided by consultants or contractors.

The budget proposal should also include any third-party in-kind contributions of goods and services provided to complete the project. The budget should not include any construction costs of permanent research facilities. It is strongly advised that applicants use the budget proposal format shown below in Table 1 or a similar format that provides this information. If selected for award, successful applicants must submit detailed supporting documentation for all budgeted costs.

Note: The budget proposal must include all project costs. Costs not included in the budget proposal are not eligible to be applied as cost share.

Table 1. - Sample Budget Proposal Format

BUDGET ITEM DESCRIPTION	COMPUTATION		Quantity Type	TOTAL COST, USD\$
	USD\$/Unit	Quantity		
Salaries and Wages				
Employee 1				USD\$
Employee 2				USD\$
Employee 3				USD\$
Fringe Benefits				
Full-Time Employees				USD\$
Part-Time Employees				USD\$
Travel				
Trip 1				USD\$
Trip 2				USD\$
Trip 3				USD\$
Equipment				
Item A				USD\$
Item B				USD\$
Item C				USD\$
Supplies and Materials				
Item A				USD\$
Item B				USD\$
Contractual				
Contractor A				USD\$
Contractor B				USD\$
Other				
Other				USD\$
TOTAL DIRECT COSTS				USD\$
Indirect Costs				
Type of rate	percentage	\$base		USD\$
TOTAL COST OF THE PROJECT				USD\$

Budget Narrative

Submission of a budget narrative is mandatory. An award will not be made to any applicant who fails to fully disclose this information. The budget narrative provides a discussion of, or explanation for, items included in the budget proposal. Include the value of third-party in-kind contributions or donations of goods and services. The types of information to describe in the narrative include, but are not limited to, those listed in the following subsections.

Salaries and Wages

Indicate Principal Investigator (PI) and other key personnel by name and title. For entities, the PI must be an employee or Board Member of the applicant.

Other personnel may be indicated by title alone. For all positions, indicate salaries and wages, estimated hours or percent of time, and rate of compensation. The labor rates should identify the direct labor rate separate from the fringe rate or fringe cost for each category. All labor estimates should be allocated to specific tasks as outlined in the recipient's technical proposal. Labor rates and proposed hours should be displayed for each task.

The budget proposal and narrative should include estimated hours for compliance with reporting requirements, including all interim technical and administrative reports, and final project technical and administrative reports. Please see *Section F.1. Reporting Requirements and Distribution* for information on types and frequency of reports required.

Generally, salaries of administrative and/or clerical personnel will be included as a portion of the stated indirect costs. If these salaries can be adequately documented as direct costs, they should be included in this section; however, a justification should be included in the budget narrative.

Fringe Benefits

Indicate rates/amounts, what costs are included in this category, and the basis of the rate computations.

Travel

It is not expected travel will be required for this project. Any conferences have to be covered by the applicant and may be applied as cost share.

Equipment

If special-purpose equipment will be purchased or manufactured, itemize all equipment valued at or greater than USD\$5,000. For each item, identify why it is needed for the completion of the Project and how the equipment was priced (i.e. quotes, past experience, engineering estimates, or other methodology). *Note: if the value is less than USD\$5,000, the item should be included under materials and supplies.*

If equipment is being rented, specify the rental duration and rate. Local rental rates are only accepted for equipment actually being rented or leased.

Materials and Supplies

Itemize supplies by major category, unit price, quantity, and purpose, such as whether the items are needed for office use, research, or construction. Identify how these costs were estimated (e.g., quotes, invoice from a similar previous project, engineering estimates, or other methodology).

Contractual

Identify all work that will be accomplished by third-party contributors, consultants, or contractors, including a breakdown of all tasks to be completed, and a detailed budget estimate of time, rates, supplies, and materials that will be required for each task. For each proposed

contract, identify the procurement method that will be used to select the consultant or contractor and the basis for selection.

Environmental and Regulatory Compliance Costs

The amount of the line item should be based on the actual expected environmental compliance costs for the project.

How environmental compliance activities will be performed and how the environmental compliance funds will be spent, will be determined pursuant to subsequent agreement between MEDRC and the applicant.

Other Expenses

Any other expenses not included in the above categories should be listed in this category, along with a description of the item and why it is necessary. Profit and fees are not allowable.

Indirect Costs

Indirect costs that will be incurred during the development or execution of a project, which will not otherwise be recovered, may be included as part of the applicant's project budget. Show the proposed rate, cost base, and proposed amount for allowable indirect costs based on the applicable cost principles for the recipient's organization. It is not acceptable to simply incorporate indirect rates within other direct cost line items.

The budget may include a *de minimis* rate of up to 10 percent of modified total direct costs.

Total Cost of the Project

Indicate the total amount of project costs, including MEDRC and cost share amounts.

D.1.2.5. Personnel Qualifications

Provide the following information on personnel:

- Identification of the PI assigned to perform the work.
- Identification of key personnel, including consultants, to be assigned for direct work on the project and as direct technical supervision, along with the nature of each individual's involvement and estimated work hours by task.
- A statement of assurance that the proposed personnel will be available for work on this agreement.
- A list of alternative personnel to be used in the event proposed personnel are not available as planned.
- A brief resume limited to two pages maximum (to include education, experience, accomplishments, and other pertinent information) for all key personnel named.

D.1.2.6. Required Permits or Approvals

Applicants must state in the application whether any permits or approvals are required and explain the plan for obtaining such permits or approvals.

D.1.2.7. Letters of Support

Please include letters from interested stakeholders supporting the proposed project. To ensure your proposal is accurately reviewed, please attach all letters of support and/or partnership letters as an appendix. (Note: this will not count against the application page limit.) Letters of support and partnership letters received after the application deadline for this FOA will not be considered in the evaluation of the application.

D.1.2.8. Summary Slide

Please include a single PowerPoint slide summarizing the proposed project. The slide must be submitted in Microsoft PowerPoint format and will be used during the evaluation process. The summary slide doesn't have to follow any particular template, but it must have the following information:

- Project title, Principal Investigator and their institution/company.
- A technology summary.
- A short description of the impact of the proposed work.
- Proposed goals.
- Any key graphics (picture, illustration, charts and/or tables).
- Requested MEDRC funds and proposed cost share.

D.2. Submission Date and Time

Application submission date deadline:

Applications will be accepted at the end of each month in 2021 at 4:00 pm Gulf Standard Time (GST), or until funds are fully committed.

Potential applicants will be informed when the 2021 research funds have been fully committed.

Applications received after the application deadline will be moved to the next month for consideration, except for December 2021. Applications received after December 2021 will not be considered unless it can be determined that the delay was caused by MEDRC.

Application Delivery Instructions

Only applications submitted to research@medrc.org will be accepted. Under no circumstances will applications received through any other method (such as fax) be considered eligible for award.

You must ensure that your proposal arrives by the date and time deadline stated in this FOA. Applications received after this date and time will not be considered for award. Late applications will not be considered unless it is determined that the delay was caused by MEDRC mishandling.

D.2.1. Acknowledgement of Application Receipt.

When an application is submitted, MEDRC will notify you through email that your application was received and whether it was received prior to the deadline identified in the FOA.

D.3. Funding Restrictions: Pre-award Costs

Project pre-award costs that have been incurred prior to the date of award may not be submitted for consideration as an allowable reimbursable expense.

Section E. Application Review Information

E.1. Technical Proposal: Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria (listed below), which comprise 100 points of the total evaluation weight. Please note that projects may be prioritized to ensure that the projects address the objectives of this FOA.

If the work described in your application is a phase of a larger project, only discuss the benefits that will result directly from the work discussed in your application and that is reflected in the budget, not the overall project.

The criteria and award of points is identified in Table 2 below. Final award decisions will be made based on research needs and budget available for the MEDRC program under this FOA.

Table 2. - Evaluation Criteria with Points Available

Evaluation Criteria	Points
A. Technical Factors	
1) Probability of delivering an innovative family-sized desalination device	0 - 25
2) Significant technology improvements in a family-sized device directly or indirectly leading to meeting OHDC Prize selection criteria	0 - 20
3) Demonstrated familiarity in the field of work	0 - 10
4) Readiness level a) No previous work b) Some work with raw data c) On-going work	0 – 10 0 - 3 0 - 6 0 - 10
5) Novelty of approach and work	0 - 10
6) Availability of equipment and facilities	0 - 5
B. Managerial Factors	
1) Qualifications of team a) Team has adequate qualifications and experience b) Team expertise is leveraged by global experts	0 – 10 0 – 5 0 - 5
2) Adequacy, completeness, and realism	0 - 5
3) QA/QC	0 - 5

E.1.1. Evaluation Criterion A - Technical Factors

- 1) Probability of a successful outcome resulting in the delivery of an innovative family-sized brackish desalination system producing 120 liters of water per day (suitable for a family of 6). Downsizing of conventional reverse osmosis and electro dialysis technologies is not considered innovative.

Traditional solar stills are not considered innovative or qualify as a precursor or earlier generation to a hand-held device, since they do not produce the hand-held required 3 liters purified water on a cloudy day.

- 2) Description of the significant, not incremental, improvements in the proposed innovative family-sized desalination system and how they could serve as a precursor for an early generation hand-held desalination device that might win the OHDC Prize Competition. This requires the proposal to address each of the Prize selection criteria at <http://desalinationchallenge.com/>.
- 3) Demonstrated familiarity with the current technology in the field of work and understanding of the potential difficulties in carrying out the work
- 4) Rate of readiness level. The proposals will be awarded points based on their readiness and work completed.
 - No work has been previously done and this is fresh new idea.
 - Some work has been completed, such as preliminary testing & raw data is available.
 - Work has been on-going, and this proposal will complete testing before being ready to scale up the research.
- 5) Novelty of approach to the work or the work itself is novel. Novelty is defined as new and/or original where the approach or the technology is not being implemented at scale.
- 6) Availability of equipment, instruments, and test facilities required for the work

E.1.2. Evaluation Criterion B - Managerial Factors

- 1) The qualifications, capabilities, and experience of the proposed Principal Investigator and other key personnel who are critical to achievement of the proposed objectives.
 - Proposed team has adequate qualifications, capabilities, and experience of the proposed Principal Investigator and other key personnel.
 - Proposed team expertise is being leveraged by participating global experts.
- 2) Adequacy, completeness, and realism of the research schedule, task phasing, and milestones.

- 3) Sufficiency of proposed QA/QC protocols to be used throughout the project, including statistical data analysis, peer review, instrument calibration, etc.

E.2. Review and Selection Process

MEDRC reserves the right to reject any and all applications that do not meet the requirements or objectives of this FOA. Awards will be made for projects most advantageous to MEDRC. Award selection may be made to maintain balance among the eligible projects listed in this FOA. The evaluation process will be comprised of the steps described in the following subsections.

E.2.1. Initial Screening

All application packages will be screened by MEDRC to ensure that:

- The applicant meets the eligibility requirements stated in this FOA.
- The application meets the content requirements of the FOA package, including submission of technical and budget proposals, a funding plan, letter(s) of commitment, and related forms.
- The application and funding plan meet or exceeds the minimum cost share requirements identified in this FOA.
- The applicant has addressed the evaluation criteria and there are no critical failures to meet the evaluation criteria.

MEDRC reserves the right to remove an application from funding consideration if it does not pass all initial screening criteria listed above. An applicant that has submitted an application that is determined to be ineligible for funding will be notified along with other applicants, or sooner, if possible.

E.2.2. Project Advisory Committee

Evaluation criteria will comprise the total evaluation weight as stated in the *Section E.1. Technical Proposal: Evaluation Criteria*. Applications will be scored against the evaluation criteria by a Project Advisory Committee (PAC), made up of experts in relevant disciplines. The PAC will also review the application to ensure that the project meets the objectives of this FOA. Each applicant will be scored based on the criteria as detailed in *Section E.1. Technical Proposal: Evaluation Criteria* above.

During PAC review, MEDRC may contact applicants to request clarifications to the information provided, if necessary.

E.2.3. Red-Flag Review

In addition, during this review, MEDRC will address any specific concerns or questions raised by members of the PAC, conduct a preliminary budget review, and evaluate the applicant's ability to meet cost share as required.

E.2.4. Managerial Review

MEDRC management will prioritize projects to ensure the total amount of all awards does not exceed available funding levels. Management in consultation with USAID will also ensure that all projects meet funding eligibility, scope, priorities, requirements, and objectives of this FOA.

E.2.5. Pre-Award Clearances and Approvals

The following pre-award clearances and approvals must be obtained before an award of funding is made. If the results of all pre-award reviews and clearances are satisfactory, an award of funding will be made once the agreement is finalized (approximately one to three months from the date of initial selection). If the results of pre-award reviews and clearances are unsatisfactory, consideration of funding for the project may be withdrawn.

E.2.5.1. Budget Analysis and Business Evaluation

MEDRC will conduct a detailed budget analysis and complete a business evaluation and responsibility determination. During this evaluation, MEDRC will consider several factors that are important, but not quantified, such as:

- Allowability, allocability, and reasonableness of proposed costs.
- Financial strength and stability of the applicant.
- Past performance.
- Adequacy of personnel practices, procurement procedures, and accounting policies and procedures.

E.3. Anticipated Announcement and Award Date

MEDRC expects to contact potential award recipients and unsuccessful applicants within three weeks after the end of the month the application was submitted, or slightly later if necessary. Within one to three months after that date, grants will be awarded to applicants that successfully pass all pre-award reviews and clearances.

Section F. Award Administration Information

F.1. Reporting Requirements

If the applicant is awarded an agreement as a result of this FOA, the applicant will be required to submit the following reports during the term of the agreement. The specific terms and conditions pertaining to the reporting requirements will be included in the financial assistance agreement.

F.1.1. Financial Report

Recipients will be required to submit a financial report with the final technical project report.

F.1.2. Administrative Performance Report

Recipients will be required to submit a final administrative performance report with the final financial report. The administrative performance report will be used to ensure that the goals and objectives of the project were met. The administrative performance report shall include the following information:

- A comparison of actual accomplishments to the milestones established by the financial assistance agreement for the period.
- The reasons why established milestones were not met, if applicable.
- The status of milestones from the previous reporting period that were not met, if applicable.
- Whether the project is on schedule and within the original cost estimate.
- Any additional pertinent information or issues related to the status of the project.

F.1.3. Interim Technical Project Reports

Technical project reports shall be submitted quarterly by the Principal Investigator and will be used by MEDRC to ensure that the goals and objectives of the project are being met. Each quarterly report should include:

- Identify the start date and anticipated completion date and describe the work conducted within the reporting period for each activity within a task.
- Describe any significant accomplishments as well as any unanticipated delays encountered during the reporting period.
- Discuss whether the activities comprising the agreement are on schedule to meet the expected completion date. If not, discuss the actions being taken to bring the activities back on schedule.
- State the progress of spending within each task.
- Compare spending in each task relative to the planned expenditures and provide an explanation for any discrepancies.

- Provide sufficient information to allow for tracking of project expenditures for each task.
- Provide, in pdf format, copies of presentations given at conferences and any journal publications that have resulted in this study during the reporting period.
- Provide a minimum of two PowerPoint slides at the end of 2nd and 4th quarters. These slides should summarize the problems and objectives, project description, research process, and any findings up to that date. Do not include any intellectual property or confidential information.

F.1.4. Final Technical Project Report

Recipients will use the MEDRC Final Report Template available at www.medrc.org/research/foa and provide their final report in a Microsoft Word document. Recipients will address review comments from the PAC and MEDRC in a timely manner for MEDRC to finalize and print. Please note that final project reports are public documents and will be free to download via MEDRC's website www.medrc.org/publications.

Section G. Contacts

Organizations or individuals interested in submitting applications in response to this FOA may direct questions regarding applicant and project eligibility and application review to:

By mail: Middle East Desalination Research Center
Building 3200
North Al-Hail Corniche
P.O. Box 21
PC 133
Al Khuwair
Sultanate of Oman

By e-mail: research@medrc.org